

MA‘ĀRIFUL-QUR’ĀN

BY

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Sūrah Muḥammad to Sūrah An-Nās

Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ

(The Sincerity)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 4 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 4

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَمْ
يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾

Say, "The truth is: Allah is One. [1] Allah is Besought of all, needing none. [2] He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten. [3] And equal to Him has never been any one."
[4]

Cause of Revelation

Tirmidhī, Ḥākim and others have recorded that the pagans of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "O Muḥammad! Tell us about the ancestry of your Lord." So Allah revealed this Sūrah. Some narratives ascribe this inquiry to the Jews of Madīnah. In view of these conflicting reports, there is a divergence of opinion as to whether this is a Makkī Sūrah or Madanī Sūrah. According to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan Baṣrī, ‘Aṭā’, ‘Ikrimah and Jābir رضي الله عنه, the Sūrah is Makkī and, according to Qatādah, Daḥḥāk رضي الله عنه and others, it is Madanī. According to one narration of Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, it is Makkī and, according to another, it is Madanī [Qurtubī].

According to another narration, the pagans added to their question whether Allah was made of gold, silver or some other stuff, in response to which this Sūrah was revealed.

Virtues of the Sūrah

Imām Aḥmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad that a person came up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, "I love this Sūrah [Al-Ikhlāṣ] immensely." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "Your love for it will cause you to enter Paradise." [Ibn Kathīr].

Tirmidhī has recorded on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the people to gather and said: "I shall recite to you a third of the Qur'ān?" When the people had congregated, he recited Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and said: "This is equal to a third of the Qur'ān." [Muslim].

In a lengthy Ḥadīth, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have recorded that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Anyone who recites Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and the *mu'awwadhatain* (i.e. the last two *sūrahs* of the Holy Qur'ān) morning and evening, they shall be sufficient for him." In another narration, the wordings are: "They will suffice him against every affliction." [Ibn Kathīr]

Imām Aḥmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I shall show you three such Sūrahs that are revealed in Torah, Injīl, Zabūr and the Qur'ān. Do not sleep at night until such time that you have recited them. They are Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and the *mu'awwadhatain*." Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir ؓ says that since I have heard this, I did not miss reciting them. [Ibn Kathīr].

Oneness of Allah

Verse [112:1] قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ Say, (The truth is: Allah is One.) The imperative *qul* (Say) is directly addressed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, thus indicating that he is Allah's Prophet and Messenger. This verse directs and commands him to convey Allah's message to mankind. 'Allah' is the personal name of that Necessary Being Whose non-existence is inconceivable. He comprises all the attributes of perfection and is free from, or above, or overrides all kinds of imperfections. The epithets *aḥad* and *wāḥid* are both applied to Allah which are normally translated as 'One' but the word *aḥad* includes an additional sense which signifies that Allah is beyond composition, plurality and resemblance, which means that He is neither composed of

any elements, nor does He have any partner, nor has He any resemblance to anything. This is a response to those who asked about Allah whether He is made of gold or silver or pearls. This concise statement covers all aspects of discussion on the Divine Being and His attributes. The imperative *qul* [say] points to the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If analyzed properly, this brief sentence covers all the detailed discussions expounded in voluminous books of theology.

Verse [112:2] اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ (Allah is Besought of all, needing none) The word *ṣamad* bears several literal senses. Therefore, the Qur'ānic exegetical scholars have assigned different meanings to this verse. Ṭabarānī, the leading authority on Prophetic Traditions, in his *kitāb-us-Sunnah*, has collected all the interpretations of the Divine attribute *Aṣ-ṣamad* and concluded that they are all authentic, and comprehend all the attributes of our Lord that have been assigned to Him, but originally it refers to 'the chief who has no superior and to whom the people turn for the fulfilment of their desires and needs; thus all people depend on him, but he does not depend on any one.' [Ibn Kathīr].

Allah is Above having Children and Procreating

Verse [112:3] لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ (He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten.) This verse responds to those who had questioned about the ancestry of Allah. There is no analogy between Allah, the Creator, and His creation. While His creation comes into being through the biological process of procreation, Allah Himself has no children, nor is He the child of anyone.

Verse [4] وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ (And equal to Him has never been any one.) The word *kufuwan*, as used in the original, means an 'example', a 'similar thing', 'one equal in rank and position'. Thus this verse means that there is no one in the entire universe, nor ever was, nor ever can be, who is similar to Allah, or equal in rank with Him, or resembling Him in His attributes, works and powers in any degree whatsoever.

Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ: A Comprehensive Concept of Allah's Oneness and a complete Negation of Shirk

There were many types of people who denied the Divine Oneness, and set up partners or rivals to Allah. Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ negates all types of such wrong belief systems, and imparts a comprehensive lesson of Divine Oneness. Among the unbelievers, several types may be identified. There

is a group that denies the very existence of God [the atheists]. Another group believes in the existence of God, but denies that His existence is 'Necessary'. A third group believes in God's existence and in His existence as 'Necessary' but denies His attributes of perfection. A fourth group believes in God's Necessary Existence and in His attributes of perfection, but denies Oneness of God and believes in and worship more than one gods and goddesses, and thus practices polytheism. Verse [1] refutes vehemently all such false belief systems. Verse [2] refers to the practices of those who do worship Allah alone, but believe that there are also other helpers who can fulfil their needs, desires and ambitions. The Divine attribute *Aṣ-ṣamad* denounces outright any such notion. A fifth group ascribes children to Allah and the phrase *lam yalid* [He neither begot anyone] repudiates this notion of theirs in the strongest terms. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ
Ends here